

Message Text

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67

ORIGIN SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 SY-05 USSS-00 SCSE-00 SCA-01 CIAE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 /070 R

DRAFTED BY S/CCT:EWSCHAEFER:IJG

APPROVED BY S/CCT - ROBERT A. FEAREY

NEA/P - MR. VAN ORDER

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK (INFO)

----- 093860

O 081720Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

CINCEUR IMMEDIATE

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD - SECDEF FOR OSD/PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS

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SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING -- ABDUCTION OF COLONEL

MORGAN

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING JULY 7, 1975.

Q. CAN YOU BRING US UP TO DATE ON HOW YOU STAND WITH YOUR NEGOTIATION ON THE COLONEL MORGAN CASE?

A. ON COLONEL MORGAN, OUR EMBASSY, ON JULY 6TH AT ABOUT 1945 BEIRUT TIME, RECEIVED A COMMUNICATION CONCERNING COL. MORGAN. A LOT OF THIS HAS ALREADY BEEN IN THE PRESS YOU KNOW, FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ACTION ORGANIZATION AND THE CONTENTS OF THIS COMMUNICATION WERE IMMEDIATELY MADE KNOWN TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT.

NOW, OUR EMBASSY IN BEIRUT IS IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. AMBASSADOR GODLEY HAS BEEN DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA. WE HAVE A TASK FORCE THAT HAS BEEN SET UP IN THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF ROBERT A. FEAREY, WHO IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT TERRORISM COORDINATOR.

Q. DID HE REPLACE HOFFACKER?

A. LEW HOFFACKER, YES, SIR.

THE ONLY OTHER POINTS I CAN GIVE YOU AT THIS TIME ARE THESE:

THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM THIS MORNING, AND THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IS DEALING WITH THIS MATTER AT THE PRESENT TIME.

AND THE ONLY OTHER THING I HAVE, FRANKLY, IS A REUTERS TICKER THAT JUST CAME IN, WHICH SOME OF YOU MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE SEEN -- SOME COMMENTS BY THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PRESS -- WHICH HAS JUST COME IN -- WHERE HE SAID THAT THEY ARE CONDUCTING CONTINUING CONTACTS WITH HELP FROM THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT. ALL QUESTIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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ARE BEING DISCUSSED. AND HE IS HOPEFUL THAT THE COLONEL WILL BE RELEASED SOON. BUT THIS IS THE ONLY OTHER INFORMATION THAT I HAVE AT THIS TIME FOR YOU.

Q. WELL, THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM, YOU ARE SAYING. WHAT CONCLUSION DID THEY COME TO CONCERNING THE REQUEST OF THE -- OR THE DEMANDS OF THIS TERRORIST GROUP?

A. I WOULD RATHER AT THIS TIME, BECAUSE THIS OBVIOUSLY IS, AS I THINK ALL OF US CAN RECOGNIZE -- AND I WOULD LIKE THIS ON BACKGROUND -- A VERY DELICATE SITUATION. IT IS IN THE HANDS OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ARE IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH OUR AMBASSADOR ON THIS CASE, AND I WOULD JUST LIKE TO LEAVE IT THAT WE OBVIOUSLY HOPE THAT COLONEL MORGAN WILL BE RELEASED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Q. AT ONETIME, AMERICAN -- US POLICY -- WAS ANNOUNCED AS BEING ONE OF NOT PAYING RANSOM TO RELEASE OFFICIALS. IS THAT STILL THE POLICY?

A. LET ME SAY THIS: OUR POLICY ON THIS QUESTION IS VERY WELL KNOWN, AND I JUST THINK THAT AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME IT IS BETTER FOR US NOT TO GO INTO IT -- RIGHT NOW.

Q. COULD WE GO BACK TO LEBANON?

A. YES, SIR.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR CONCLUSION AS TO WHY COLONEL MORGAN WAS TAKEN?

A. I HAVE NO CONCLUSION ON THAT. IT IS NOT VERY CLEAR.

Q. ALL RIGHT, THANK YOU.

Q. IS THAT ON BACKGROUND, DID YOU SAY?

A. RIGHT NOW -- THE THING I SAID, RIGHT NOW?

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Q. WHAT YOU JUST SAID

A. NO, THAT CAN BE ON THE RECORD.

Q. DO YOU LINK THESE ATTACKS (ISRAELI ATTACKS ON LEBANON) AND THE CAPTURE OF MORGAN?

A. NO, I DO NOT. I CAN'T LINK IT.

AS I SAID TO YOU EARLIER, AS TO THE REASONS WHY COLONEL MORGAN WAS ABDUCTED -- IT IS VERY UNCLEAR, AND SO OBVIOUSLY, I CANNOT MAKE ANY SUCH LINK.

Q. BOB, WE'VE GOT A LOT OF ASSUMPTIONS HERE THIS MORNING.

YOU QUOTED A REUTERS DISPATCH CONCERNING WHAT THE LEBANESE
PRIME MINISTER SAID TO THE PRESS. ARE YOU CONFIRMING THE
ACCURACY OF THAT REPORT?

A. NO, AM NOT. NO.

I JUST THOUGHT THAT FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE INTERESTED
IN THE COLONEL MORGAN STORY -- JUST HAPPENED TO GET
THE TICKER AND THOUGHT MAYBE SOME OF YOU HADN'T HAD A
CHANCE TO SEE IT YET -- AND I JUT PAST IT ON. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KIDNAPPING, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE159974
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EWSCHAEFER:IJG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750235-0630
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750776/aaaacpzz.tel
Line Count: 179
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SCCT
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAR 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <22 MAR 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING -- ABDUCTION OF COLONEL MORGAN
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, CASC, SOPN, US, LE, (MORGAN, ERNEST R)
To: BEIRUT MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006